

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 10967

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, GR
SUBJECT: DEFENSE MINISTER AVEROFF'S IMPRESSIONS OF ELECTIONS AND
PAPANDREOU

1. DURING MY CALL ON MINISTER OF DEFENSE AVEROFF NOVEMBER 30, I CONGRATULATED HIM ON HIS REAPPOINTMENT AS MOD AND HIS STRONG SHOWING IN THE ELECTIONS. AVEROFF RESPONDED THAT WHILE FINAL VOTE FOR HIM WAS LARGE, HE HAD STARTED THE ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN IN VERY BAD SHAPE AND ONLY A MONTH OF HARD POLITICKING HAD TURNED THE SITUATION AROUND. BECAUSE OF HIS DUTIES IN ATHENS, HE HAD NOT VISITED HIS CONSTITUENCY FOR THREE YEARS EXCEPT ON NATIONAL DAYS; HE HAD NOT GIVEN OUT ANY OF THE FAVORS TRADITIONALLY EXPECTED OF GREEK POLITICIANS; MANY LOCAL BOYS HAD FAILED TO GET INTO MILITARY SCHOOLS BECAUSE OF TOUGHER EXAMS INSTALLED BY AVEROFF; PAPANDREOU AND HIS WIFE MARGARET HAD MADE SPECIAL EFFORTS IN AVEROFF'S CONSTITUENCY TO LURE AWAY HIS SUPPORTERS; AND IN GENERAL AVEROFF HAD NEGLECTED HIS POLITICAL FENCES. LOSS OF SUPPORT BY MANY NEW DEMOCRACY DEPUTIES FROM OTHER AREAS ALSO REFLECTED THEIR PRE-OCCUPATION WITH NATIONAL RATHER THAN PROVINCIAL CONCERNS, ALTHOUGH OF COURSE THIS WAS ONLY PART OF THE REASON FOR ND'S DECLINE. CARAMANLIS IS DETERMINED TO WIN BACK LOST VOTERS BY ADOPTING DOMESTIC MEASURES OF DIRECT BENEFIT TO THE PEOPLE AND
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BY PAYING MORE ATTENTION TO GRASS ROOTS POLITICAL ORGANIZING. HE DOES NOT, HOWEVER, INTEND TO INITIATE THE KIND OF GIVE-AWAY PROGRAMS PAPANDREOU SO FREELY ADVOCATED DURING THE CAMPAIGN.

2. PAPANDREOU'S STRENGTHENED STATUS WILL GIVE HIM NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR MISCHIEF AND WILL UNDOUBTEDLY LEAD TO MORE DEMAGOGY AND IRRATIONALITY IN PARLIAMENTARY ACTIVITIES BUT AVEROFF THINKS THE

EFFECTS OF THIS ON THE GOG'S PROGRAMS CAN BE MINIMIZED. IN THE FOREIGN POLICY FIELD, WHICH WAS NOT A PARTICULARLY SIGNIFICANT CONCERN DURING THE ELECTIONS, THE NEW POLITICAL LINE-UP SHOULD NOT MAKE CARRYING OUT THE PRIME MINISTER'S POLICY MUCH MORE DIFFICULT THAN IT WAS BEFORE, ALTHOUGH GOG WILL HAVE TO BE MORE CAREFUL AND PERHAPS MUTED IN HOW IT PRESENTS ITS PROGRAM. THERE SHOULD BE NO EFFECT AT ALL ON NEGOTIATIONS WITH TURKEY, AVEROFF BELIEVES, BECAUSE THE GREEK PEOPLE WOULD WELCOME THE CHANCE TO TAKE SOLID ACTION TO PUT THE TURKISH PROBLEM BEHIND THEM (BUT HE SEES NO EVIDENCE THAT A REAL SOLUTION IS IN SIGHT). IF THE OPPORTUNITY TO ACT SHOULD COME AND PAPANDREOU OPPOSED IT DEMAGOGICALLY, THE GOG COULD HOLD A REFERENDUM ON THE MATTER WHICH AVEROFF THINKS WOULD BE HEAVILY IN FAVOR OF SETTLEMENT.

3. AVEROFF SPENT A LOT OF TIME DISCUSSING THE NEED TO CUT PAPANDREOU DOWN TO SIZE AND THE BEST WAY OF DOING IT. HE COMMENTED ONLY HALF JOKINGLY THAT THE MOST EFFECTIVE REMEDY WOULD BE TO LET PAPANDREOU BE PRIME MINISTER FOR SIX MONTHS SO THE PEOPLE WOULD SEE WHAT KIND OF PERSON HE REALLY IS, BUT HE REALIZES A LESS RADICAL SOLUTION WILL HAVE TO BE FOUND. AVEROFF PLANS ON SOME APPROPRIATE OCCASION TO GIVE PUBLICITY TO PAPANDREOU'S APRIL 1974 STATEMENT TO AN ITALIAN JOURNAL THAT THE WAY TO BRING ABOUT CHANGE IN GREECE IS NOT BY THE BALLOT BUT BY ORGANIZED GUERRILLA ACTION AND VIOLENCE, AND HIS APRIL 1977 STATEMENT THAT PASOK IS A COMPLETELY MARXIST PARTY. AVEROFF IS ESPECIALLY CONCERNED ABOUT PAPANDREOU'S EFFORTS TO CONFIDENTIAL

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MAKE INROADS WITH THE MILITARY AND IS CONTINUING HIS EFFORTS TO COUNTER THEM. HE HAS IDENTIFIED A NUMBER OF "QADHAFIIST" OFFICERS OF ULTRA-NATIONALIST AND SOCIALIST BELIEFS IN THE ARMED FORCES AND KNOWS THERE ARE MANY OTHERS WHO ARE SUSCEPTIBLE TO PAPANDREOU'S BLANDISHMENTS.
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